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FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 565, SEPTEMBER 21,

ACTION BONN 499, DEPARTMENT 565, INFORMATION LONDON 378,  
PARIS 399, MOSCOW 363, POLAD USAREUR 305

PARIS FOR EMBASSY, USRO, STOESEL AND MCGUIRE.

REFERENCE: BERLIN'S 400 DEPT, 355 BONN.

WHILE BASIC WEST BERLIN MORALE PICTURE HAS NOT RECENTLY BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY FLUCTUATIONS AS WAS CASE IN AUGUST, DEPRESSING EFFECT OF COMPLETION OF ULBRICHT'S "WALL", ABSENCE OF NEW WESTERN COUNTERMEASURES, AND ALL BUT COMPLETE SEVERANCE OF EAST FROM WEST BERLIN HAVE FURTHER PENETRATED INTO WEST BERLIN CONSCIOUSNESS. MOUNTING CRESCENDO OF EAST GERMAN PROPAGANDA EXPRESSING INTOXICATION WITH RECENT SUCCESSES HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY IRRITATING. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN INCREASE OF TENSION AND NERVOUSNESS AMONG WEST BERLIN POPULATION CAUSED BY SOV/GDR PROPAGANDA DIRECTED AGAINST USE OF AIR CORRIDORS AND BUZZING OF WESTERN PLANES (USUALLY MAGNIFIED BY THE PRESS) BY SOI JETS. EXTENT OF WEST BERLIN WORRY THAT NEXT SOV/GDR BLOW WILL BE STRUCK AGAINST AIR ACCESS WAS COMPOUNDED BY SOV/GDR EXPLOITATION OF INCIDENT INVOLVING TWO GERMAN FLYERS AND REFLECTED IN NUMEROUS RUMORS RE SEVERANCE OF AIR CONNECTIONS. MISSION OFFICERS WERE FREQUENTLY ASKED BY WEST BERLINERS WHETHER THEY SHOULD TAKE TRIPS OR VACATIONS OUTSIDE BERLIN IN FACE OF POSSIBLE INABILITY RETURN TO THEIR HOMES.

ONE OF REASONS THIS CRISIS IS CONSIDERED WORSE THAN ANY PREVIOUS ONE SINCE WORLD WAR II IS OBVIOUS COMMUNIST AIM TO ESTABLISH CONTROLS OVER AIR ACCESS, AN ATTEMPT NOT EVEN MADE DURING BLOCKADE. THERE IS GENERAL BELIEF THAT OVERLAND ACCESS

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-2- 565, SEPTEMBER 21, 11 PM FROM BERLIN

WILL REMAIN RELATIVELY UNDISTURBED ONLY AS LONG AS EVERYBODY HAS POSSIBILITY OF USING ESCAPE ROUTE BY AIR. IF LATTER FELL UNDER SOME SORT OF COMMUNIST CONTROL, REGIME'S ARBITRARY CONTROLS ON LAND IS EXPECTED TO BE TIGHTENED CONSIDERABLY.

FONMIN CONFERENCE HAS CAUSED LESS PUBLIC ATTENTION HERE THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, PARTLY BECAUSE IT WAS OVERSHADOWED BY FINAL STAGES OF FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, BERLIN PAPERS WERE RELUCTANT TO COMMENT ABOUT CONFERENCE BECAUSE REPORTS FROM CORRESPONDENTS REFLECTED GENERAL IMPRESSION, ALREADY PREVALENT AROUND TOWN, THAT IN PREPARING DIPLOMATIC MEETING GROUND WITH SOVS, FONMINS CONCENTRATED ON POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS TO BE OFFERED BY WEST. IN THIS CONNECTION ADENAUER PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT (BERLIN'S 513 DEPT, 456 BONN) HAD PARTICULARLY DELETERIOUS EFFECT. IT GENERALLY BELIEVED THERE VERY LITTLE ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION ON BERLIN WITHOUT GETTING INTO QUESTIONS VITALLY AFFECTING LIFE OF CITY, SUCH AS ITS TIES WITH FEDREP. BERLINERS ARE THEREFORE CONVINCED THAT IF WEST ADHERES TO ITS PLEDGES AND EAST MAINTAINS ITS COURSE, THERE VERY LITTLE TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT AND SOVS MAY THEN PROCEED WITH TACTICS, SO FAR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL, OF PRESENTING WEST WITH NEW FAITS ACCOMPLI IN BERLIN SITUATION. FOR THIS REASON POPULATION EXPECTS STRONG AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO NEXT SOV MOVE AS ONLY MEANS OF IMPRESSING SOVS WITH EARNESTNESS OF WESTERN RESOLVE.

BERLIN'S ROLES AS ESCAPE HATCH, AS SHOW WINDOW OF WEST, AS MEETING PLACE OF GERMANS FROM EAST AND WEST, AND AS NUCLEUS FOR REUNIFICATION, HAVE BEEN ALL BUT ELIMINATED BY COMMUNIST ACTIONS IN AUGUST. BERLINERS ARE GIVING MUCH THOUGHT TO WHAT THEIR MISSION NOW SHOULD BE. CURRENT PESSIMISM MIGHT BE LARGELY DISPELLED BY A NEW CONVICTION THAT CITY WILL NOT BE RENDERED POLITICALLY IMPOTENT AND THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN SOME SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL LIFE. IN THAT CASE AMBITIOUS PLANS ANNOUNCED BY WEST BERLIN GOVT TO REVITALIZE CITY'S ECONOMY AND GIVE IT NEW MISSION BY TURNING WEST BERLIN INTO OUTSTANDING CENTER OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND INFORMATION WOULD FIT INTO A REALISTIC SETTING. PRESENT GLOOM WILL BE DISPELLED AND NEW CONVICTION

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-3- 565, SEPTEMBER 21, 11 PM FROM BERLIN

TAKE ROOT ONLY IF THERE ARE STRONG AND IMMEDIATE WESTERN RESPONSES TO NEXT SOV/GDR MOVES. BERLINERS QUITE OPEN IN EXPRESSING HOPE THAT GENERAL CLAY, WHOSE ARRIVAL WAS WIDELY HERALDED BY PRESS AND WHOSE PRESENCE HAS ALREADY PROVIDED A MUCH NEEDED MORALE SHOT IN THE ARM, WILL BE ABLE TO INSTILL GREATER VIGOR AND SPEED INTO WESTERN ACTIONS.

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